



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Pajaro Fuel Reduction		
PROJECT LOCATION	T11S R2E Section 29 West Watsonville	COUNTY	Santa Cruz
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Sarah Collamer		
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Project Description

The Pajaro Fuel Reduction is located within the City of Watsonville, approximately half a mile from the airport. The area is directly adjacent to Corralitos Creek and entirely on private property in a Wildland Urban Interface setting. The property to the west is an agricultural berry field and the area to the east is a mix of businesses, a housing development and a low-income apartment building. The creek channel is bordered by a bench above the creek which has become a transient encampment. The vegetation is a mix of large trees (eucalyptus, sycamore and willow) and low growing vines and exotics, including English Ivy, Himalayan black berry, and bamboo. The area has large amounts of plastic and metal trash and hazardous and human waste. There are also unpermitted structures, mattresses and shopping carts. CAL FIRE has responded to over 40 calls within this 4-acre area last year, either fire (debris, wildland) or medical aids. All calls required a police presence. These frequent escaped warming and cooking fires threaten the city of Watsonville and put emergency response personnel at risk.

Before project activities start a professional clean-up crew will remove the trash, shacks and hazardous material. Immediately following the clean-up vegetation removal will begin. The project proposes to remove trees less than 10 inches, limb remaining trees up to eight feet and masticate the vines and under growth. Crews will be required to conduct some handwork. Trees will be lopped and scattered or chipped. A 30-foot buffer will be established along Corralitos Creek and no work shall occur in that buffer. We hope to improve the line of sight and make the existing trespass order enforceable. Fuel reduction activities will make new starts less of a threat to the local community and restore that part of Corralitos Creek to functioning wildlife habitat.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- ☒ Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 4 §15304 Minor Alterations to Land
☐ Statutory Exemption (state code section):
☐ Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
☐ Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
☐ Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

The work proposed is a minor alteration to vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees and is consistent with Categorical Exemption Class 4 - Minor Alterations to Land. No activity is proposed that is listed as a limitation under CCR 15300.2 (a-f).

Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit Headquarters, 6059 Highway 9, Felton, CA 95018.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

FEB 11 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE


Helge Eng, Deputy Director Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

2/11/19